

Health Alert

October 22, 2001

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SUBJECT: Protecting Investigators from Exposure to Bacillus anthracis Using Personal Protective Equipment

The Department of Health and Senior Services is forwarding the following information from CDC. Please contact the Department if you have any questions at 1-800-392-0272.

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Protecting Investigators from Exposure to Bacillus anthracis Using Personal Protective Equipment

NIOSH personnel and other investigators at risk for exposure to Bacillus anthracis, the organism causing anthrax, should wear protective personal equipment (PPE), including respiratory devices, protective clothing, and gloves. The items described below are similar to those used by emergency personnel responding to incidents involving letters or packages. Responders need to use greater levels of protection in responding to incidents involving unknown conditions or those involving aerosol-generating devices.

Powered Air-Purifying Respirator with Full Facepiece and High-Energy Particulate Air (HEPA) Filters

- * The constant flow of clean air into the facepieces is an important feature of this respirator because contaminated air cannot enter gaps in the face to facepiece seal. These respirators also give wearers needed mobility and field of vision.
- * Use respirators in accordance with a respiratory-protection program that complies with the OSHA respiratory-protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134).
- * Respiratory facepieces for NIOSH investigators will be assigned on the basis of results of quantitative fit testing.
- * Wearing a properly functioning, powered, air-purifying respirator with a full facepiece that is assigned to the wearer on the basis of quantitative fit testing will reduce inhalation exposures to 2 % or less of what they would be without wearing this type of respirator.

Disposable Protective Clothing with Integral Hood and Booties

- * Wearing protective clothing not only protects the skin but can eliminate the likelihood of transferring contaminated dust to places away from the work site.
- * Wear disposable rubber shoe coverings with ridged soles made of slip-resistant material over the booties of the disposable suit to reduce likelihood of slipping on wet or dusty surfaces.
- * Decontaminate all PPE immediately after leaving a potentially contaminated area.
- * Remove and discard protective clothing before removing the respirator.

Disposable Gloves

- * Disposable gloves made of light-weight nitrile or vinyl protect hands from contact with potentially contaminated dusts without compromising needed dexterity.
- * A thin cotton glove can be worn inside a disposable glove to protect against dermatitis, which can occur from prolonged exposure of the skin to moisture in gloves caused by perspiration.

How to contact us:

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